



## AB 2054– Protect California Trees with Shot Hole Borer Beetle Prevention

### IN BRIEF

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Assembly Bill 2054 would take steps to protect trees and urban forests in California by setting up a framework of cooperation between the state, local agencies, and stakeholders in combatting the spread of the shot hole borer beetle.

### BACKGROUND

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Boring beetles, specifically the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer, are spreading across California and causing millions of dollars of damage to our state's trees.

The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer is an invasive pest which likely originates from South East Asia<sup>1</sup>. The tiny beetle bores into trees like the box elder, coast live oak, and avocado, and brings with it a symbiotic fungus that can infect and kill the host trees.

Unfortunately, due to recent drought many trees in California are not in optimal health, and so may be more susceptible to infection from the fungus.

Due to the high susceptibility of avocado trees to this fungus, the uncontrolled spread of this beetle will become a significant problem for avocado farmers. The beetle has also impacted a wide variety of tree species in urban areas, where infected trees pose public safety risks because they may fall across roads and sidewalks.

Furthermore, in both urban and rural areas as more trees die from the disease spread by these beetles, they become primed to easily ignite, increasing the threat of serious wildfires.

The beetle is currently most prevalent in Southern California, with a range including Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties. According to OC Parks, the beetles have caused 6.5 million dollars of damage in tree inventory loss in Orange County.

Currently, it is difficult to stop the spread of this pest because the beetle does not have a natural predator in California, and common pesticides and fungicides wear off of the trees.

While some local agencies, impacted agriculture, and the Department of Food and Agriculture have begun to invest resources into this problem, there is currently no state framework for how to address this.

### SOLUTION

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AB 2054 would help protect California's important native, urban, and agricultural trees from the shot hole borer beetle by beginning the process for a statewide coordinated effort.

This bill would:

- Instruct the Invasive Species Council of California and the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee to coordinate with state and local agencies and stakeholder groups in developing a plan to cure or suppress the diseases associated with the spread of shot hole borer beetles.
- After completion of the plan, require state support of efforts to cure or suppress the diseases affiliated with the beetle infestations including:
  - Research for identifying infected trees and preventing further infestation; and
  - Matching grants for local suppression or curative efforts.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<sup>1</sup>[http://ucanr.edu/sites/socaloakpests/Polyphagous\\_Shot\\_Hole\\_Borer/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/socaloakpests/Polyphagous_Shot_Hole_Borer/)